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U.S. EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA:  
SHOULD IT BE CONTINUED?

by

Deborah L. Jenkins

June 1994

Thesis Advisor:

Thomas C. Bruneau

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U.S. Embargo Against Cuba: Should It Be Continued?

by

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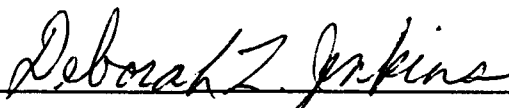
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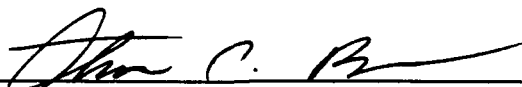
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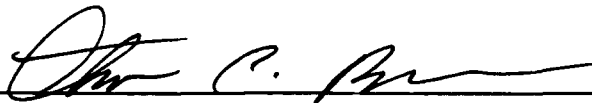
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## ABSTRACT

With the end of the Cold War, it is time for the United States to reassess its embargo against Cuba. Without the help of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries, Cuba is no longer a threat to the United States. While the embargo, in conjunction with the loss of Soviet support, is imposing severe economic hardship on the Cuban population, Fidel Castro's regime continues to hold their firm grip on the country. Thus, the ultimate goal of destabilizing the government has not been reached. In order for the United States to be in a position to encourage and influence a transition to democracy in Cuba, instead of the chaos that could result from destabilization, it should work toward closer relations with Cuba by ending the embargo, encouraging U.S. investment in Cuba, and a freer exchange of information and ideas.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	HISTORY OF THE U.S. EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA.....	4
III.	SANCTIONS: THEORY AND APPLICATION TO CUBA.....	10
IV.	RESULTS OF THE EMBARGO.....	27
	A. ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO IN CUBA.....	27
	B. POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO IN CUBA: .....	39
	IS IT OBTAINING THE DESIRED RESULTS?	
	1. Coup from Below? .....	39
	2. Coup from the Top? .....	51
	a. The Party.....	52
	b. The Military and Security Apparatus.....	56
V.	U.S. POLICY OPTIONS FOR ENCOURAGING DEMOCRACY.....	63
	IN CUBA	
VI.	INCENTIVES AND IMPEDIMENTS TO LIFTING THE.....	75
	EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA	
VII.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY.....	85
	TOWARD CUBA	
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	90
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST.....	95

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has been searching for and trying to create a new strategy for its foreign policy. For years, the opposition to communism has shaped and determined U.S. policy. This has been true also of its policy toward Cuba. The U.S. embargo against Cuba has been in effect for over 30 years, and at one time was the best policy option available even though it has still not achieved the ultimate goal of destabilizing Fidel Castro's regime by weakening Cuba's economy.

This thesis will show that even though Cuba's economy has been hurt through a combination of economic sanctions and the withdrawal of military and economic aid by the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries, Fidel Castro has been able to maintain political control over the country through the use of repression, the encouragement of Cuban nationalism, and shifting the blame for its economic problems from the Cuban government to the handy scapegoat of U.S. imperialism.

The stated goal of the embargo against Cuba is the destabilization of the Cuban government. However, the question must be asked: can the goal of destabilization best be reached by maintaining the embargo? Or will lifting the embargo be more likely to achieve this desired result? I argue that lifting the embargo would be a more effective means of destabilization since an increased communications

and information flow between the United States and Cuba is more likely to trigger the desire to reform.

Finally, U.S. policymakers need to look beyond mere destabilization of the Cuban government and get themselves in position to influence a transition toward a democratic government in Cuba. Again, the best way to do this is to drop the embargo and work toward a more friendly relationship with Cuba. The United States has been willing to do this with other communist countries such as China and Vietnam, even though their governments are less than perfect in the eyes of U.S. policymakers. For instance, President Clinton recently dropped the threat to remove China's most favored nation (MFN) trading status in spite of China's human rights policies. He instead chose to renew their most favored nation status in order to place the United States in a position from which it could influence their behavior. Our current policy toward Cuba is becoming obsolete. Both sides could benefit from a change in this policy.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. embargo against Cuba has a history nearly as long as Castro's revolutionary government itself. The goal of this embargo is to weaken and eventually topple the Cuban government and encourage a democratic government to take its place. The embargo, in conjunction with the fall of the Soviet Union and its subsequent withdrawal of economic support to Cuba, has seriously hurt Cuba economically. But is the embargo achieving its political goal of weakening the existing government and encouraging democratic opposition to that government? This is an important factor to consider.

My original plan was simply to examine two competing hypotheses:

1. If the United States continues its embargo against Cuba, it will lead to the fall of the communist regime.
2. Lifting the U.S. embargo against Cuba will lead to the fall of the communist regime.

As the thesis progressed, an additional issue began to emerge. Fidel Castro's regime cannot last forever, with or without the embargo, although he currently remains in firm control of the situation. Bearing this in mind, what is the



best policy stance for the United States to take in order to influence the transition to a democratic government? The ultimate goal of the United States should not only be the fall of the current regime, but also the establishment of a democratic government to take its place. It is not in the U.S. interest for Castro to be dispelled simply to be replaced by chaos and a possibly violent fight for power. Whether it wants the title or not, the United States is looked on as the world's policeman, especially in the Western Hemisphere. A power struggle in Cuba could force the United States into a military intervention which would be both costly and difficult to extricate itself from. Historically, U.S. military occupations in Latin America do not have a particularly good record for leading to democratic regimes. In fact, the opposite is true. Once the United States withdrew after an occupation, the situation usually returned to the status quo, or worse. Good examples of this were the U.S. occupation of Veracruz in Mexico, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Cuba early in the century.

This thesis will give a brief history of the embargo, will look into the economic and political impact of the embargo both in the United States and in Cuba, and will examine the issue of whether it is achieving its goal, as well as the methods which Castro's government uses to remain in control and in power. Some of these methods are: repression, appeals to nationalism, and inflammatory

rhethoric against United States imperialism. Finally, another question to be addressed is whether the embargo should be continued, or is a new policy toward Cuba more appropriate now that the Soviet Union is no longer a factor and the East-West conflict is in the past?

## **II. HISTORY OF THE U.S. EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA**

The history of the U.S. embargo against Cuba began shortly after Fidel Castro took power in 1959. The United States imposed an economic blockade on October 19, 1960, that banned all exports from the United States, with the exception of food and medicine. This occurred following an agreement in February 1960, with the Soviet Union, for \$100 million in credits to purchase industrial equipment and for technical assistance, an agreement to purchase 400,000 tons of sugar in 1960, as well as 4 million tons by 1964, and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union on May 8, 1960, three days after the Soviet announcement that it had shot down a U.S. U-2 reconnaissance plane over Soviet airspace. The United States cancelled Cuba's sugar quota on July 5, 1960. Cuba retaliated by nationalizing U.S. businesses in Cuba. On October 17, 1960, Cuba nationalized the remaining U.S. banking institutions in Cuba. Beginning November 10, 1960, United States ships were not allowed to carry cargo to or from Cuba. In January 1961, the situation worsened and the United States severed its diplomatic relations with Cuba. This was in response to Castro's insistence that the United States cut its embassy staff in Havana down to less than 20 personnel. Later that year, the Foreign Assistance Act, Section 20, gave the

president authorization "to establish and maintain a complete commercial embargo" against Cuba. In April 1961, Castro proclaimed the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution, and in December, declared himself a Marxist-Leninist. On April 17, 1961, U.S. trained and supported Cuban exiles launched the ill fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. On December 16, 1961, the United States implemented a complete ban, cutting any remaining exports to Cuba. It was followed by a complete commercial embargo in January 1962. The embargo was extended in March 1962, covering all products that contained any material originating in Cuba, even if they were manufactured in another country besides Cuba. In August 1962, the Organization of American States (OAS), at the urging of the United States, passed a resolution requesting its members to cut diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba. Mexico was the only member to disregard the request. Trying to enforce the embargo, the United States threatened to deny assistance to any country that allowed its ships to transport cargo to or from Cuba. In July 1963, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations prohibited U.S. citizens from having financial or commercial relations with Cuba. In 1964, the OAS imposed a formal economic embargo against Cuba, responding to Castro's attempt to export revolution throughout the hemisphere.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James D. Rudolph, ed., Cuba: A Country Study, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: American University, Foreign Area Studies, 1985), pp. 40-44, 143, 219-220.

The embargo has undergone relaxation and tightening phases in its over 30 year history. During the early 1970's, relations between the United States and Cuba were marked by restraint on both sides. A better understanding between the two countries was reached during the first half of the decade. Both sides had determined the preconditions for the resumption of diplomatic and trade relations. Also during this time, the United States initiated improved relations with other communist countries by establishing relations with China, signing agreements with the Soviet Union, and ending the war in Vietnam. More importantly, perhaps, Cuba put an end to the exportation of revolution to other Latin American countries. In 1975, the United States relaxed the embargo, allowing subsidiaries of U.S. companies to trade with Cuba, and visits by Congressmen, business people, academics, and journalists. Between 1980 and 1985, the embargo was tightened again.<sup>2</sup> This was no doubt due to President Reagan's (and Jean Kirkpatrick's) belief that Soviet-Cuban expansionism was a very strong and real threat to Central and South America, and in fact, to the entire world.<sup>3</sup> And in fact, there was reason for concern. The Nicaraguan Revolution in 1979, in which the Sandinistas overthrew Anastasio Somoza and instituted a Cuban style

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<sup>2</sup>Rudolph, pp. 56-57, 143.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Carothers, In the Name of Democracy: U.S. Policy Toward Latin America in the Reagan Years (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), p. 119, and Rudolf, pp. 193-194.

socialist system, was supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union. The marxist guerrilla group, FMLN, in El Salvador, which became active in 1980, is another prime example of communist expansionism in Latin America.<sup>4</sup>

Most recently, on October 23, 1992, President Bush signed the Torricelli Bill, also called the Cuban Democracy Act, into law. This law further tightened the trade embargo against Cuba.<sup>5</sup> The law prohibits foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies from conducting trade with Cuba and prevents ships that trade with Cuba from entering U.S. ports for six months.<sup>6</sup> The bill also authorized increased telephone and mail services to Cuba in order to appeal to the liberal votes in Congress.<sup>7</sup> It was sponsored by Representative Robert Torricelli who was chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee at the time, and who had close ties to Jorge Mas Canosa,

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<sup>4</sup>Ernest E. Rossi and Jack C. Plano, Latin America: A Political Dictionary (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1992), pp. 90-91; PCC leadership membership found in: Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 1992 (Washington, DC: n.p., 1992), p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>Martin Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters, "Cubans Determined to Resist as New U.S. Law Tightens Economic Embargo," Militant, 56, No. 40 (1992), pp. 1, 10. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>6</sup>"The World from: Mexico City," Christian Science Monitor, 28 Oct. 1992, p. 3. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>7</sup>Christopher Marquis, "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout: Foundation Demonstrates Its Influence in Washington," Miami Herald, 28 Sep. 1992, Sec. A, pp. 1, 11. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

chairman of the powerful Cuban American National Foundation.<sup>8</sup> The strategy, according to Torricelli, is to decrease money going to Cuba, while increasing the flow of ideas.<sup>9</sup> Trade between U.S. subsidiaries and Cuba had been growing before passage of the bill, tripling between 1988 and 1990. By 1990, the latest year for which statistics were available, it had reached \$705 million.<sup>10</sup>

Recently, Cuba has quietly been getting help from an unexpected quarter- the United States. Although the trade embargo is still in effect, the United States has been allowing about a thousand Cuban exiles to fly directly from Miami to Havana every week. These pilgrims, as a group, carry perhaps as much as \$100 million a year to Cuba, to help their relatives with the rent, the purchase of necessities and luxuries, a business deal, etc. This travel has not been only from the United States. Cuba is also allowing, perhaps even encouraging, its citizens to visit the United States. According to the U.S. State Department, about 27,000 Cubans entered the United States on temporary

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<sup>8</sup>Paul Anderson and Christopher Marquis, "N.J. Congressman Makes Castro's Demise His Crusade: Get-tougher Bill Pushed by Torricelli," Miami Herald, 2 Feb. 1992, Sec. A, p. 8. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>9</sup>Christopher Marquis, "Cuban Embargo Bill Unveiled: Baker Defends Current Course," Miami Herald, 6 Feb. 1992, Sec. A, p. 21. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>10</sup>David Clark Scott, "Plan to Stiffen Cuban Ban Annoys U.S. Trading Allies," Christian Science Monitor, 23 Jun. 1992, pp. 1, 4. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

visas. Eighty-five to 90 percent of them return to Cuba after a few months, without defecting to the United States. These people do not return to Cuba empty handed. They are able take back most of what they earn while in the United States. The Cuban government also extracts hundreds of dollars in fees from each of these travellers, including over \$100 to request an exit permit, a \$35 departure fee, a \$35 reentry fee, and \$135 per month to extend their visas. Between Cuban exiles travelling to Cuba, and Cuban nationals working overseas, Cuba receives at least \$500 million per year.<sup>11</sup> This migration is an important source of U.S. dollars for Cuba.

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<sup>11</sup>Millman, pp. 66-67.



### III. SANCTIONS: THEORY AND APPLICATION TO CUBA

There are many opinions about the use of sanctions, for instance, when should they be used?; what are the best methods for implementation?; when are they likely to be successful?; how should success be determined? These are all valid questions to ask, and they are important for a government to consider when it is deciding whether or not to apply sanctions against another country. Each potential sanction episode is unique and must be approached on a case by case basis. However, there are certain fundamental rules and variables that apply to all situations. This section will put forth some of these rules and variables.

Sanctions are considered a tool of international diplomacy that may be used to coerce target governments (the governments of those countries against which the sanctions are imposed) into a certain response. Usually sanctions are imposed by big powers, simply because they are big and want to influence events on a global scale, and they are able to. Instances in which sanctions are used collectively against a target country are usually instances in which major powers have enlisted the help of their smaller allies. There are three main reasons that countries impose sanctions: 1) to demonstrate their resolve. The United States has frequently used sanctions for this reason.

U.S. presidents seemingly feel compelled to dramatize their opposition to foreign misdeeds, even when the likelihood of changing the target country's behavior seems remote. In these cases sanctions often are imposed because the cost of inaction- in terms of lost confidence at home and abroad in the ability or willingness of the United States to act- is seen as greater than the cost of the sanctions. Indeed, the international community often expects such action from the United States, to demonstrate moral outrage and to reassure the alliance that America will stand by its international commitments. The impact of such moral and psychological factors on the decision to impose sanctions should not be underestimated, even if it is hard to document.<sup>12</sup>

2) deterrence- the sender country (that is, the country imposing the sanctions) attempts to discourage the future implementation of objectionable policies by increasing the costs associated with those behaviors. In many cases it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine whether the sanctions imposed were actually effective in deterring future misdeeds. 3) as a surrogate for other measures. They may be used as a more moderate measure, equivalent to a slap on the wrist, when more extreme measures are deemed inappropriate. The imposition of sanctions communicates three messages: 1) it tells the target country that the sender does not condone its actions; 2) it shows its allies that words will be backed up by actions; and

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<sup>12</sup>Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott, and Kimberly Ann Elliott, Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1990), pp. 10-11.

3) it communicates to domestic audiences that the sender's government will take action to protect the nation's vital interests.<sup>13</sup>

There are five types of objectives that sanctions are used for: 1) modest policy change in the target country; 2) destabilization of the target government; 3) disruption of a major military adventure; 4) impairment of the military potential of the target country; and 5) major policy change in the target country.<sup>14</sup>

Sanctions are frequently used in an effort to destabilize target governments. Often these attempts at destabilization have pitted a superpower against a smaller country. According to Hufbauer, et al, the United States has attempted destabilization efforts 15 times, often against other countries in the Western Hemisphere such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Brazil, Chile, and Panama. Sanctions played at least a modest role in the overthrow of Trujillo in 1961, of the Brazilian President Joao Goulart in 1964, of President Salvador Allende of Chile in 1973, and in the defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the 1990 elections. However, it took military intervention in Panama to remove Noriega despite the imposition of severe sanctions. Finally, Fidel Castro and

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<sup>13</sup>Hufbauer, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>Robert E. Looney and Craig Knouse, "Predicting the Success of Economic Sanctions," The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations, 13, No. 2 (1991), p. 44.

his regime in Cuba have not been toppled despite three decades of sanctions, in large part because of the aid received from the Soviet Union until recently.<sup>15</sup>

There are three main types of sanctions. Trade sanctions, which include both export and import sanctions, and financial sanctions. As far as trade sanctions go, export sanctions are used more often by sender countries and are considered to be more effective than stopping imports from the target country. This is because sender countries are more likely to play a bigger role as suppliers of exports than as buyers of imports. The United States is a good example of this. It plays a dominant role in the manufacture of military and high-technology equipment. Also, in the United States, Congress has granted the president much greater flexibility in restraining exports than in slowing imports. Exports may be easily stopped by using the mechanisms of the Export Administration Act, while imports can be slowed down only by using the more unwieldy International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the national security section (section 232) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, or preexisting quota legislation (such as sugar or textile quotas). One problem with export controls is that they often result in a heavier burden on individual companies in the sender country. Import controls, on the

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<sup>15</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 6-7.

other hand, usually result in the burden being spread out and shared more widely.<sup>16</sup>

As stated previously, the United States has used all three types of sanctions (import and export, and financial) against Cuba without achieving the desired results.

Unfortunately, predicting the success of sanctions is extremely difficult. "The historical record shows that the effects of sanctions are unpredictable and indiscriminate: even if they produce their intended adverse economic effects, the desired political effects do not automatically follow." Even so, economic sanctions have been used increasingly as tools of foreign policy. One recent study came to the conclusion that only a third of the sanctions imposed have been successful.<sup>17</sup>

According to Looney and Knouse, the outcome of any sanction episode depends on three elements: 1) the objectives or goals of the sanctions; 2) the definition of success; and 3) the methods used to implement the sanctions.<sup>18</sup> As stated previously, the objective of the U.S. sanctions against Cuba is the destabilization of Castro's regime. As for the definition of success, "the success of an economic episode as viewed from the perspective of the sender country has two parts: the extent

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<sup>16</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 65-66.

<sup>17</sup>Looney, pp. 40-41.

<sup>18</sup>Looney, p. 43.

to which the policy outcome sought by the sender country was in fact achieved, and the contribution made by sanctions to a positive outcome." However, one problem with determining the policy outcome sought by the sender is that usually the only way to determine it is by examining public statements made by the sender government. This creates a problem because the goal publicly announced by the government may not be the goal actually intended. It is also possible that the goal may change over time. Methods of implementation have been discussed previously (financial and trade sanctions), however, there are several additional points that can be mentioned. Since sanctions must be announced publicly, the target government may find it difficult to comply with the objectives of the sanctions without losing face. This could be very important to the target government. After all, if it acquires the reputation for giving in to pressure applied from the outside, they may believe that they will be looked on as weak. As a result, it is not unusual for there to be a stiffening of public resistance and resolve in the target state after the imposition of sanctions. This is one reason why sanctions fail.<sup>19</sup> These two factors can be seen in action in Cuba. Castro is a very proud man who would most surely see it as a sign of weakness to succumb to the pressures imposed on Cuba by the United States. Increased public resistance and

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<sup>19</sup>Looney, pp. 45-46.

resolve can also be seen at work in Cuba. Castro and his regime have worked very hard at appealing to and cultivating Cuban nationalism, and have been extremely successful. The United States is constantly portrayed as the evil imperialist country that is the cause of the economic hardships that are being felt in Cuba.

Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott give nine simple recommendations or "commandments" for sender countries to help enable the success of sanctions. This section will analyze how well the U.S. embargo against Cuba follows these rules.

1. "Don't bite off more than you can chew.":

"At most there is a weak correlation between economic deprivation and political willingness to change." While the economic impact of sanctions may be strongly felt by both the sender and the target, other factors may have a stronger effect than the sanctions in influencing the political outcome. Sanctions are rarely effective in leading to major policy changes in the target country.<sup>20</sup> This is true so far in Cuba. Cuba is currently experiencing severe economic hardships. However, Castro has been able to maintain political control through repression of the population and control over political and military elites.

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<sup>20</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 94-95.

2. "More is not necessarily merrier.":

In fact, the greater the number of allies needed to implement sanctions, the less chance there is that they will succeed. When a sender believes he needs the help of allies, it may be that the desired goals are too ambitious. If the goals are modest, then the help of allies is not needed. Also, when it appears that a large number of countries is ganging up on a target country, the situation may backfire on the senders when another country (called a black knight) or group of countries comes to the aid of the target.<sup>21</sup> This was the case for Cuba during the Cold War. The Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries came to Cuba's aid by extending trade, and military and economic aid. They saw an excellent opportunity to make a friend in the Western Hemisphere who would give them military bases near the United States and a foothold in the hemisphere. Exports from Cuba to the socialist countries jumped from \$2 million in 1959 (2 percent of total exports), to \$150 million in 1960 (24 percent), to \$458 million in 1961 (73 percent). Imports from the socialist countries soared from \$2 million in 1959 (.30 percent) to \$119 million in 1960 (19 percent), to \$492 in 1961 (70 percent). As for the United States, it supplied 70 percent of Cuba's total imports in 1958, 68 percent in 1959, and only 4 percent in 1961. Total imports from Western countries decreased by 44 percent between 1957

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<sup>21</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 95-97.



and 1962. However, Canada, Mexico, and Western European countries continued their trade with Cuba after 1960. In the early 1970's several members of the OAS (Peru, Argentina, Jamaica, Guyana, and Barbados) reestablished trade with Cuba, violating the 1964 OAS imposed sanctions. Then in July of 1975, the OAS sanctions were lifted.<sup>22</sup> As can be seen, it is nearly impossible to enforce complete sanctions against a country. Even a country's allies and those who voted for the sanctions may end up breaking them.

3. "Do pick on the weak and helpless":

There appears to be a direct correlation between the economic and political health of the target country and its susceptibility to economic pressure. It only makes sense that countries under stress or undergoing significant problems would be much more likely to give in to coercion by the sender country. The health and stability of the target country are especially important when the goal of the sanctions is destabilization of the target government, where success is usually seen against weak governments. Also, the target country is usually much smaller than the sender. Therefore, although sanctions usually only involve a small percentage of the trade or financial flows of the sender country, they are able to affect the target country significantly. For cases involving the goal of

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<sup>22</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 199-201.

destabilization, the average GNP ratio is greater than 400 (sender : target). The GNP ratio for the United States to Cuba is 173. This would give it a 43 percent chance of success, according to Hufbauer, et al. However, relative size is only a necessary, not a sufficient condition for the success of sanctions. More important factors for success are the extent of trade linkage, the economic effect of sanctions, and the warmth of relations between the sender country and the target prior to the initiation of sanctions.<sup>23</sup> It is also important in considering Cuba to remember that there is a strong regime in power.

4. "Attack your allies, not your adversaries":

Sanctions are more effective when used against friendly nations and close trading partners than when used against unfriendly nations or those with which the sender has little trade. This only makes sense since friends are usually more willing to change their behavior or policies than are enemies. They are also less likely to attract and accept help from an enemy of the sender (black knight). Of course, it is important to remember that allies may be alienated by sanctions, so it is important to consider the possible problems in future relations that may develop as a result. Cuba had a high level of trade linkage to the United States (47 percent) and therefore close relations prior to

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<sup>23</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 87, 97-99.

implementation of sanctions.<sup>24</sup> However, as was previously noted, the Soviet Union stepped in almost immediately to offset U.S. sanctions.

5. Act quickly:

Sanctions that are applied slowly or incrementally allow time for the target country to adapt to the sanctions and influence popular opinion, thus encouraging the development of nationalism. Also, public enthusiasm in the sender country may fade over a long period of time, making it difficult to continue to implement the sanctions. To make the situation worse, the target country is more likely to get help from another major power if sanctions are prolonged.<sup>25</sup> This was true in Cuba since it was able to get assistance from the Soviet Union shortly after the embargo was imposed. As stated before, the Soviet Union saw its chance to extend its influence in the Western Hemisphere by aiding Cuba, and took it. Cuba has also been able to mobilize its population and appeal to Cuban nationalism. The United States is portrayed as an imperialist devil, in fact, acting as an effective scapegoat for the nation's problems.

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<sup>24</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 87, 99-100.

<sup>25</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 100-101.

6. "In for a penny, in for a pound" (Cost to target):

Those cases that impose heavy costs on the target are usually successful. For successful sanctions, the average cost to the target country is 2.4 percent of GNP. Those that failed averaged only 1 percent of GNP, barely touching the economy of the target country. However, again, it is possible for the sanctions to attract the aid of a "black knight" (the black knight corollary) which may offset any harm that might otherwise result to the target economy. In the case of Cuba, the actual cost to Cuba is \$114 million or 4.4 percent of GNP. This is greater than the 2.4 percent of GNP that is usually necessary for success. However, the sanctions against Cuba have been particularly unsuccessful, no doubt originally due to the role of the Soviet Union.<sup>26</sup>

7. "If you need to ask the price, you can't afford the yacht" (Cost to sender):

The more costly it is for the sender country to impose sanctions, the less is the likelihood that they will succeed. Sender countries should take political as well as economic costs into consideration before applying sanctions. Sanctions should be designed so that particular domestic groups or firms are not unduly affected by the costs. For example, forcing companies to cancel existing contracts places an overly large part of the burden on those

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<sup>26</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 87, 101-102.

companies. This is called retroactive application. One way to alleviate the costs to these companies is for the government to compensate them for their unsold inventories.

Application of financial sanctions (as opposed to trade sanctions) is usually the least costly to the sender. This includes restriction of aid, denial of credits, and freezing assets. These actions may still inhibit the target country's ability to conduct trade without the imposition of formal trade controls. Financial sanctions applied alone are usually more successful than when paired with trade sanctions. This is because when all three types of trade sanctions are applied, the goal may be too ambitious.<sup>27</sup> The use of all three types of sanctions against Cuba may be an indication that the United States has bitten off more than it can chew in this instance.

In the case of the U.S. embargo against Cuba, the cost to the United States is considered to be a 3 on a scale of 1 to 4, where a 4 is rated as a major loss to the sender. A rating of 3 is considered a modest welfare loss to the sender.<sup>28</sup>

#### 8. "Choose the right tool for the job":

Economic sanctions are often used in combination with other measures against the target country. These measures

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<sup>27</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 102-104.

<sup>28</sup>Hufbauer, p. 87.

may include covert action, quasi-military measures, or regular military operations. These additional measures are used most frequently in instances aiming at destabilization and impairment of military potential. Usually these measures are not used until it is believed that sanctions are not working, or they are working too slowly.<sup>29</sup> The United States has used some of these measures against Cuba. The U.S. assistance provided to Cuban exiles in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba was the most well known example, among others that failed.

9. Consider carefully:

It goes without saying that sender governments need to consider carefully the objectives and the method of implementation of sanctions before making the final decision to use them. They will need to be sure the goals are attainable, that they can inflict enough damage on the economy of the target country to get their attention, that imposition of sanctions will not prompt other countries to come to the target's aid, and that the costs to their own domestic economies and those of their allies is not too great. Unfortunately, these conditions are not met very often and the chances of success will be low. Also, even when sanctions seem to be the best or only action that may

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<sup>29</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 104-105.

be taken, it is still necessary to tailor the type of sanctions to the circumstances.<sup>30</sup>

I would take this rule one step further and say that once sanctions are actually imposed, the goals and costs of the sanctions should be reviewed periodically to determine whether the sanctions are successful. If they are not being successful, then perhaps they need to be readjusted or dropped altogether. It cannot be automatically assumed that the sanctions will eventually achieve success if they are just continued long enough. Indeed, in the case of Cuba, they have been shown to be a failure. Thus, the question must be addressed: should they be continued? I believe it is now time to reconsider the U.S. embargo against Cuba for this reason. Perhaps it is time to formulate and implement new policies with regard to Cuba.

Table 1 summarizes these "commandments" and their application to the U.S. embargo against Cuba, when the sanctions were first implemented back in 1961, and now in 1994. While the application of the rules was somewhat more positive in 1961, and indeed, it may very well have been the only viable alternative at the time, as can be seen from the table, the sanctions now have fewer positive aspects.

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<sup>30</sup>Hufbauer, p. 105.

# APPLICATION OF "COMMANDMENTS" TO CUBA

	1961	1994
1. Don't bite off more than you can chew	-	-
2. More is not necessarily merrier	-	+
3. Do pick on the weak and helpless	+/-	+/-
4. Attack your allies not your adversaries	+/-	-
5. Act quickly	-	N/A
6. Cost to target	+/-	+/-
7. Cost to sender	-	-
8. Choose the right tool for the job	+/-	-
9. Consider carefully	+/-	-

TABLE 1

To conclude this section, I would like to use Looney and Knouse's definition of a successful sanction episode to analyze the success of the embargo against Cuba. First, to what extent has the policy outcome sought by the United States been achieved; and second, what contribution have the imposed sanctions made to any positive outcome. Remember,



the ultimate goal of the sanctions is to destabilize Castro's regime and remove him from power. This objective has not yet been met. Castro has been able to maintain his control of the country. Economically, although the United States and Cuba had a high level of trade linkage before sanctions were imposed and the loss of this trade should have seriously damaged Cuba, the Soviet Union quickly jumped in to fill in the resulting gap. Even so, Cuba lost more than 4.4 percent of its GNP, an amount normally high enough to lead to the success of sanctions. However, even with the addition of military measures, such as the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs incident, Castro still retains firm control of the country. The following section will take a closer look at the economic and political situation in Cuba and how Castro is able to maintain his power even in the face of sanctions and economic hardship.

#### IV. RESULTS OF THE EMBARGO

##### A. Economic Effects of the Embargo in Cuba

There is no doubt that the U.S. embargo against Cuba is hurting Cuba economically, especially since the fall of its previous sponsor, the Soviet Union. However, it is difficult to decipher and compare the Cuban economy with western economies because as with all socialist economies, they use different methods to measure aspects of their economy. For instance, Cuba uses the measure gross social product (GSP) instead of gross national product (GNP) as western nations do. They can only be compared by rough approximation. The Cuban regime, as all socialist governments, is intimately involved in its country's economic affairs. As of 1989, it controlled 90 percent of all land and 100 percent of all the business in the country, including: industry, banking, communications, transportation, and education.<sup>31</sup>

Cuba's economy has traditionally been extremely dependent on a single crop- sugar. Even with Cuba's efforts to diversify its agricultural sector, sugar has accounted for more than 80 percent of its exports. At one time, the Soviet Union was willing to buy this sugar at extremely

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<sup>31</sup>Michael J. Mazarr, "Prospects For Revolution in Post-Castro Cuba," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 31, No 4 (1989), p. 63.

inflated prices- 5 to 6 times the market price.<sup>32</sup> However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and the Eastern bloc countries are no longer willing or able to pay such exorbitant prices to Cuba for a commodity they can get much cheaper on the open market. With the fall of communism, Cuba is no longer considered a strategic position by the former Soviet Union because it no longer needs or can afford an ally or a location for its bases in the Western Hemisphere.

In addition, Cuba's economy is very inefficient at both the macro and micro levels. There have been many large scale failures since 1960, of industrial and agricultural projects that have been undertaken by the government. Examples include large highways that lead out of the capital, Havana, that carry very little traffic. Also, crop diversification experiments that not only have not been successful, but have actually disrupted other sectors of the economy. Many of these projects have been hindered by a lack of crucial components or labor, or a combination of both.<sup>33</sup>

In 1990, Castro declared a "Special Period in Time of Peace" which imposed increased austerity and rationing.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Mazarr, p. 64.

<sup>33</sup>Mazarr, p. 64.

<sup>34</sup>Edward Gonzalez and David Ronfeldt, Cuba Adrift in a Postcommunist World (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992), p. v.

By August 1990, petroleum rationing had been imposed, reducing daily gas and fuel deliveries by 50 percent in the state sector, and 30 percent in the private sector. Household electrical consumption was cut. Factories reduced their operating hours. According to Schulz, Cuba "was entering an era of spiraling underdevelopment" and was "experiencing substantial de-industrialization."<sup>35</sup> While the reduced oil deliveries from the Soviet Union were the catalyst for Cuba's economic downturn, the main reason for the crisis was the downfall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Perestroika began to disrupt Soviet-Cuban trade in the second half of 1989. Since Soviet companies were allowed to trade directly in the foreign market, they preferred to sell to customers who could pay cash rather than to countries like Cuba. Also, during 1989 and 1990, Cuba lost 50 percent of its exports to Eastern bloc countries and its Soviet sugar subsidies. Even worse, the price of sugar on the world market dropped substantially. In December 1990, the Soviet subsidy was cut altogether, and they insisted that Cuba settle its debts.<sup>36</sup> Obviously, Cuba paid a high price for its primarily monocrop sugar economy.

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<sup>35</sup>Donald E. Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 35, No. 1 (1993), pp. 90-92.

<sup>36</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," pp. 90-92.

Previously, the Soviet Union had allowed Cuba to run up a continuous merchandise trade deficit which grew to an enormous \$23.5 billion by 1990, according to former Soviet Prime Minister Ryzkov. This amount was later verified by officials in Havana. When asked whether he thought the debt would be forgiven, a high-ranking Cuban official answered, "I don't know if they will forgive the debt, but we're not going to pay it."<sup>37</sup>

In 1991, Cuba had expected to import 10 million metric tons of oil from the Soviet Union, 3 million metric tons less than the amount received in 1989. However, in reality, it received only 8.6 million metric tons. Cuba's imports from the Soviet Union dropped from \$5.823 billion in 1990, to \$1.673 billion in 1991, a drop of 71 percent.<sup>38</sup> By the Fall of 1991, Cuba was importing only 50 percent of the Soviet and Eastern European goods it had imported only two years earlier.<sup>39</sup>

In 1992, the condition worsened. In July 1992, Russia stopped all petroleum shipments to Cuba. Russian oil production had decreased by 35 percent. Deliveries to the Ukraine and Belarus took priority. In addition, Russians cut back on their imports of Cuban sugar because of the

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<sup>37</sup>A. R. M. Ritter, "The Cuban Economy in the 1990's: External Challenges and Policy Imperatives," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 32, No. 3 (1990), pp. 124-125.

<sup>38</sup>Gonzalez, p. v.

<sup>39</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," p. 92.

extremely high prices of basic necessities. Unfortunately, Cuba did not have the hard currency necessary to establish the new trading partners it needed to improve its economy. Finally, in November 1992, Cuba negotiated a deal with Russia to trade one million tons of sugar for 1.6 million tons of crude oil.<sup>40</sup> Gasoline rationing was tightened drastically. Public transportation was cut back. Cars, buses, trucks, and tractors were being replaced by bicycles and draft animals. Most consumer goods and food were added to the rationing program. Even with large-scale labor mobilization in rural areas, Cuba was expected to produce only 30 to 40 percent of the food that it had previously imported.<sup>41</sup> In early September 1992, Castro announced that Cuba had lost \$4.7 billion a year in direct losses due to the low sugar prices, rising cost of imports, and loss of credits, among other factors. It had lost another billion dollars in indirect losses due to destabilization of supplies, export production problems, and unspecified financial problems. Altogether, Cuba suffered \$5.7 billion in losses in 1992. Cuba was also forced to discontinue its work on the Juragua nuclear power plant due to economic conditions. It was unable to meet Russia's demands for the \$200 million in cash and the \$300,000 monthly payroll for technicians necessary to complete the project. This was a

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<sup>40</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," pp. 92-93.

<sup>41</sup>Gonzalez, pp. v-vi.

great blow to Cuba since it had already sunk \$1.1 billion in the project and it had been counting on the plant to help get them out of their economic difficulties by solving their energy crisis and therefore largely reducing Cuba's dependency on oil imports.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of 1992, Carlos Lage, the government's leading economic planner, announced that since 1989, Cuba's net import capacity had dropped from \$8.1 billion to \$2.2 billion in 1992. Also, over 75 percent of Cuba's markets and 73 percent of its import resources had been lost. Trade with the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe dropped to only 7 percent (\$830 million) of what it had been previously. The government's food program was not sufficient to meet the population's needs due to sharp decreases in the imports of fertilizer, herbicide, chemicals, and animal feed. The gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by between 34 and 51 percent.<sup>43</sup>

Beginning in July 1993, Castro was forced to begin opening up the economy to make up for the loss of Soviet imports it has experienced. These changes include legalizing the dollar, granting increased autonomy to farmers, and allowing people in more than 135 small-scale occupations to work for themselves. However, these people must first be cleared by the Ministry of the Interior before

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<sup>42</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," pp. 94-95.

<sup>43</sup>Schulz, pp. 95-96.

obtaining a license, and professionals- that is anyone holding a college degree- are barred from self-employment. Also, farmers who sell their own vegetables privately do not set their own price- that is still done by the local cooperative."<sup>44</sup>

There are many examples of these new small businesses, some legal, some illegal. For example, Pablo Lazo is a black market cab driver in Havana who is an unemployed economist, and who gives out his father's business card along with his own. His father is a doctor at the local clinic who also makes private house calls on the side. Not long ago, these black market services would have landed the would be entrepreneur in jail. However, things are changing as Cuba's crisis deepens. As Lazo says, "The state can't pay for anything anymore. That's why they let us work for ourselves." According to one author, "few Cubans fear a backlash from communist hard-liners" for this black market activity. Much of the bureaucracy itself has been infiltrated by capitalism. The military's constructing companies have been building new tourist hotels, while the Ministry of Agriculture is pursuing fruit canning partnerships. The government knows it needs dollars to survive and realizes that only economic liberalization can provide them."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>McGeary, p. 45.

<sup>45</sup>Millman, pp. 66-68.



One problem being faced by these resourceful entrepreneurs, the legal ones, is that it is still illegal for one Cuban to hire another Cuban. This is considered exploitation. However, this does not deter them. For example, an owner of a motor and automobile repair shop has three helpers, all trained mechanics that have been discharged from government motor pools. Since they cannot get licenses as employees, but only as owners, the shop owner got around the problem by legally establishing a cooperative. The "co-owners" then pay the original owner a portion of their earnings as rent on equipment. This has been a lucrative enterprise since there are many old and worn out items in need of repair in Cuba. Instead of repressing these new entrepreneurs, the government is reportedly disappointed by the small numbers (less than 50,000) and would actually like to encourage them. This is because unemployment has been rising in Cuba, and is currently widespread. The regime is becoming concerned, and it is hoped that self employment in small businesses will help counteract this trend. In the future, optimists even hope that Cubans may be able to hire and fire their own employees.<sup>46</sup>

To help improve the situation, Cuba has instituted new economic policies. The state still controls the internal economy and sugar sector for the most part. However, the

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<sup>46</sup>Millman, p. 68.

external sector is turning to foreign investors for help in joint enterprises in petroleum, tourism, biotechnology, and other selected areas. Since there have been no significant oil discoveries, Cuba is depending on tourism and biotechnology to pull them out of their decline. These joint ventures have been financed primarily by West European investors, mainly Spanish, but also French, British, and Scandinavian companies. Canadian, Brazilian, and Mexican firms are also being courted. Previously, the foreign partner was limited to 49 percent participation, however, Cuba is now allowing foreigners majority investment in certain cases. "Joint ventures or other economic arrangements (such as debt equity swaps) are permitted where the Cuban state enterprise needs access to the capital, technology, and marketing network of a foreign investor to develop a new industry." The foreign partner is allowed to send its share of the profits overseas, appoint its own management, and hire Cuban workers from a pool of selected workers. Land ownership is not allowed, but long-term leases are granted to foreign investors. The expansion of the tourist and biotechnology industries are seen as short-to medium-term solutions to Cuba's economic problems, while the possible discovery of offshore oil fields is seen as a long-term solution.<sup>47</sup> However, some experts do not believe these joint ventures will do much to improve Cuba's economic

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<sup>47</sup>Gonzalez, pp. vi, 23-24.

situation. It will be very difficult for Cuba to break into a market that is already dominated by huge multinational corporations, especially given its lack of experience.<sup>48</sup> When Cuba eliminated virtually all small businesses, it lost a huge amount of human capital. These entrepreneurs had developed management skills, technical knowledge, and marketing expertise. Most of these people were assimilated into the hierarchical bureaucratic structure that remains in Cuba today.<sup>49</sup> Others simply fled the country, with the vast majority now living in the United States.

Another scheme for the regime to obtain dollars, now that it is legal for Cuban citizens to hold them, was to open the government's hard currency stores or diplotiendas in July 1993, to any Cuban citizen able to pay for merchandise with dollars. Previously, these stores had been open only to tourists, diplomats, and individuals with ties to the party. These dollar stores have been a big success, with dozens of new ones opening since last summer. Most of these shops have been opened in the residential barrios where there may be huge lines of people waiting to buy foreign products. One company, Commercial Cimex, S.A., has opened 4 dollar stores in Miramar. It is a 50-50 joint venture between Mexican and Cuban investors. One of the stores averages 3,000 to 4,000 customers per day with sales

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<sup>48</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," p. 94.

<sup>49</sup>Ritter, p. 123.

of about \$15 per customer. The company expects to do \$70 million worth of business this year. In addition to providing a one percent tax on the stores' gross sales, these stores also encourage new enterprises in the local neighborhoods, such as: black market taxis, "valet parking" for bicycles, and food vendors.<sup>50</sup>

Still, businessmen in Cuba have a lot to learn. After decades of communist dictatorship, they must relearn the language and strategies of capitalism in order to succeed in their joint ventures. Liberalizing their investment rules to allow 51 percent for Cuba and 49 percent for the foreign investor, as they have done, should help bring in some foreign expertise to help teach them. Also, foreign companies can send as much of the profits out of Cuba as they want, as long as they open dollar accounts at Cuban-owned banks. Companies are also allowed to subcontract goods and services from abroad. Examples of new joint ventures are a British firm working with the state oil monopoly to contract for excess refining capacity to process lubricants to sell in the Caribbean; an Israeli company investing \$22 million in Cuban agriculture to grow grapefruit to sell in Europe; and a Canadian company joining with Cuba's Ministry of Basic Industry in a joint venture for mineral exploration, specifically gold, investing about \$1.5 million. According to one corporate

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<sup>50</sup>Millman, pp. 67-68.

executive, "The signal I receive is the Cubans are open for business. They don't want taxes and regulations to impede business, they want investment." <sup>51</sup>

While it is difficult to determine precisely how much of an effect sanctions have had on the Cuban economy, they have had an effect. According to Hufbauer, "the embargo has been quite economically damaging." He concludes that the impact of the sanctions has been a 2 percent reduction of growth per year. The annual economic costs to Cuba when it was still on friendly terms with the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc have been calculated. There has been \$25 million in increased shipping costs due to the necessary diversion of trade since it can no longer trade with the United States which was an extremely close (in terms of both physical distance and warmth of relations) trading partner. It also experienced a reduction in purchasing power since there was a shift in trade to countries with nonconvertible currencies. This loss was estimated to be 30 percent of the total trade with these countries for a total of \$341 million. This adds up to a total loss of \$366 million per year. Even with compensatory aid from the Soviet Union of \$252 million per year, there was still a loss of \$114 million per year to Cuba.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately for Cuba, the

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<sup>51</sup>"Cuba Learns," p. 68.

<sup>52</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 201-202.

Soviet Union is no longer around to help offset the cost of sanctions, so the situation has only gotten worse.

However, while the embargo has damaged Cuba's economy rather badly, "its political results, on the other hand, have been questionable." Others have called the sanctions an outright failure. The policy result of the sanctions were rated as a 1 on a scale of 1 (failed) to 4 (success). The contribution of sanctions was ranked as a 1 on a scale of 1 (none) to 4 (significant). And finally, the success score of the sanctions was ranked as a 1 on a scale of 1 (outright failure) to 16 (significant success). If anything, "the embargo may have exerted a counterproductive effect on Castro, and may have helped consolidate his position in Cuba."<sup>53</sup>

With these facts in mind, the next section will examine the methods Castro and his regime have used to maintain their power in Cuba.

## **B. Political Effects of the Embargo in Cuba: Is it Obtaining the Desired Results?**

### **1. Coup from Below?**

Obviously, as discussed in the previous section, Cuba is experiencing enormous economic difficulties due to the U.S. embargo and the loss of its previous Soviet support. But are the economic deprivations having the desired effect of weakening and destabilizing the Cuban

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<sup>53</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 202-203.

government and encouraging the Cuban people to overthrow Castro and his regime? Or is the embargo simply a relic of the Cold War continued for political and moral reasons to teach Castro and Cuba a lesson?

Even with the extreme economic hardships that Cuba is currently experiencing, Fidel Castro still seems to have a strong grip over Cuba. However, there is some evidence of dissent. According to Gonzalez, certain sectors of Cuban society are experiencing "increased political alienation, discontent, and criticism," and people have been questioning issues that were formerly taken for granted. As evidence of this dissent he cites Cuba's increasing crime rate as reported by both the Cuban government and the foreign media. These include black marketing and other forbidden capitalist activities as well as violent crimes. Human rights and dissident groups have also been on the rise.<sup>54</sup>

Much of this tension, crime, and dissident activity may be traced to the hardships caused by the economic crisis. Basic needs, such as free education, health services, day care, food, low cost housing, public transportation, and clothing, have been reduced and rationed. Inequities between political and social classes are increasing. Government and party officials, and state supported scientists, artists, and writers enjoy special privileges to which the rest of the population has no

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<sup>54</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 10-11.

access. Tensions are also seen between young and old. While a majority of the older generation, including the revolutionary leadership, may support Castro's policies, the younger generation, born after Castro came to power, and who make up 60 percent of the population, are typically apolitical, reject Cuba's austere society, and are otherwise opposed to many of the values and ideas of the older generation. Juvenile delinquency has increased and student protests and anti-Castro activities took place in 1990 and 1991. Most of the people fleeing Cuba by boat to Florida are young men, and this number has increased from 26 in 1986, to over 2200 in 1991, an increase of almost 8500 percent in 5 years.<sup>55</sup> Of course, for Castro this can be seen as a relief valve that can help ease some of the pressure within Cuba. This exodus of dissatisfied young men who are leaving the country means that fewer dissenters and political opposition leaders actually remain in Cuba. It would actually be to his advantage to allow these people to leave the country without hindering them.

Despite the fact that times are tough in Cuba and popular discontent is on the increase, it seems unlikely that the regime will weaken to the point of collapse in the near future. Castro has several means at his disposal to keep the population under control. One method is repression. The Ministry of Interior has set up "rapid-

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<sup>55</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 11-13.



reaction brigades," made up of civilian supporters of the regime. These groups take mob action against regime critics and opposition. They also encourage the participation of the general population in these acts of repudiation against dissenters. Several of these incidents have been well publicized, especially an act of physical assault against Maria Elena Cruz Varela, a dissident poet, in November 1991, and a later incident against Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz, a famous human rights activist who was trapped in his house for 15 hours by a violent mob. The mob acting against Sanchez was actually under the direction of the police. These occurrences were not covered up by the authorities. One can only infer that they want the public to know about these incidents in order to keep opposition under control.<sup>56</sup> This government activity of harassing and beating dissidents and vandalizing their homes has been verified by an Americas Watch report.<sup>57</sup> Castro and his regime are obviously more than willing to use repression against dissidents and this has led to the fact that there is very little resistance to his regime.<sup>58</sup> However, the regime does try to make these crackdowns against dissidents

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<sup>56</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 13-14.

<sup>57</sup>Martin McReynolds, "Report: Rights Suffered in '92'," Miami Herald, 14 Dec. 1992, sec. A, p. 12. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>58</sup>Luis Aguilar Leon, "Some Are Viewing Castro through a Favorable Glass," Miami Herald, 6 Aug. 1993, sec. A, p. 10. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

appear to be the consequence of the popular will, indicating that Castro himself does not want to be seen as directly responsible for the repression. Also, under the Cuban constitution, individual rights are subordinated to the state<sup>59</sup>, somewhat legitimizing government repression.

The Cuban security apparatus itself has been strengthened in recent years through purging of those considered to be a threat to the current regime. This security apparatus has been able to infiltrate and in effect neutralize society and the politico-military institutions of the state of which it is a part. As a result, it has been able to put down dissent more effectively, preventing the forging of an organized opposition. The fact that no autonomous opposition group has been able to form within Cuba decreases the likelihood of change occurring.<sup>60</sup> Without an effective opposition group (counter-state) being formed, there is no real alternative to the state. As long as there is no strong link between the opposition (counter-state) and society, the state will be able to maintain control over society.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Rolando P. Paez, "Lift the U.S. Embargo- and Force Castro's Bloody Hand," Miami Herald, 29 Jan. 1993, sec. A, p. 15. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>60</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," p. 97.

<sup>61</sup>Gordon H. McCormick, Class Notes, National Security Affairs 3800, The Theory and Practice of Social Revolution, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 1 Nov. 1993.

The military itself, the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), is an organization that was professionalized with Soviet help and has proven its efficiency in combat overseas. Its leaders remain loyal to Fidel and Raul Castro and are subordinated to civilian authority. This loyalty was strengthened by the trial in June 1989, of Arnaldo Ochoa, who was Cuba's most decorated combat soldier and a "Hero of the Republic." Ochoa was charged with high treason for engaging in drug trafficking as well as corruption and other serious offenses. According to Gonzalez, this trial was advantageous to the regime for several reasons: 1) it covered up the government's involvement in drug operations that had dated back to 1980; 2) it got rid of a potential source of trouble or opposition- perhaps even an eventual coup plotter; and 3) "it reaffirmed the Castro brothers' authority over the military, demonstrating the FAR's loyalty and obedience to Fidel and Raul even when it came to approving maximum punishment for one of its own."<sup>62</sup> It also served as an obvious example that no opposition against the government would be tolerated. If even a "Hero of the Republic" is not safe from retribution, no one, military or civilian, is beyond the reach of the omnipresent and unforgiving government.<sup>63</sup> Given the historic frequency of military coups in the rest of Latin America, this control

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<sup>62</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 16-17.

<sup>63</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?", p. 100.

over the military and its loyalty to the regime is obviously extremely important, and has surely been a significant factor in the longevity and stability of Castro's regime in Cuba.

Besides the mobilization of "defense brigades" to control the population, the regime has traditionally put a high priority on mobilization of the population, even before the current crisis. Mobilization has been used to send urbanites to the countryside to help in agricultural efforts; to help fight black marketing; and to help build defensive structures to defend them against the U.S. attack that Castro continues to warn them about. The strategy is to keep the people busy and under close supervision, so that they will be "unlikely to have the time, energy, opportunity or courage to engage in anti-regime behavior."<sup>44</sup>

Surveillance of the population has also played a key role in deterring organized opposition to the regime. In order for people to join opposition groups and participate in their activities, there must be an element of trust involved. However, the security apparatus has intertwined itself so tightly with the state and society that it is difficult for people to know who to trust. There have been rumors that the president, and two additional members of the Cuban Democratic Coalition, an opposition group aligned with the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF), were working

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<sup>44</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?", p. 98.

with the police. This suggests to the populace that there is no one who can be trusted. Anyone could be an agent for the government. Even if the rumors are not true, it suggests that the security apparatus is able to disseminate disinformation to such an extent that people believe it enough to increase their distrust. Either way, this will keep new members from joining the group and persuade current members to leave the group. Many people in Cuba have become used to hiding their true feelings about the regime, showing instead their outward support for it. They are not willing to accept the serious consequences incurred by opposing the regime. These consequences are often very serious, including: physical abuse, harassment, imprisonment, and loss of food rations, employment, or housing. Increasingly, opposition leaders are being tried and given quite lengthy sentences.<sup>65</sup>

Currently, many Cubans do not even trust their own neighbors. It is not uncommon for neighbors to give reports on each other to the local block committee, especially about those who do not conform. Reportable offenses range from religious observance to economic offenses to criticism of the regime. The government keeps dossiers on all Cubans that record these offenses and follow them throughout their life.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," pp. 98-99.

<sup>66</sup>McGeary, pp. 42-52.

Although by 1992, 50 human rights and dissident groups had formed (20 dealing with human rights and 30 with strictly political intentions), most are calling for peaceful change through free elections or internal reform of the regime. These groups do not currently pose much of a threat because they remain small, fragmented, and highly individualized. Some may even be under the control of the regime itself. In order to become effective, these groups must take collective action that is very difficult under the current repressive conditions. Individuals are fearful of taking opposing action alone, preferring to wait until others take action since there is strength in numbers. This is more likely to happen if they see that the government is collapsing, or there is no other alternative to the current regime. Castro and his government are still able to wield enough power to repress these dissident groups, perhaps seeking to avoid an incident like Tiananmen Square in Cuba. They especially target those groups that have broad appeal to both the masses and the elites, such as those with a social democratic orientation, and are more lenient with those with close ties to the conservative exiles in Miami.<sup>67</sup> This makes sense, since most of the general population is not likely to be drawn to groups that are allied with the Cuban exiles because the exiles are seen as having fled the situation and therefore are not seen as

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<sup>67</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 34-36.

having a right or the legitimacy to involve themselves in Cuban politics.

Yet another reason for the difficulty in organizing opposition to the regime is that there is no strong institution in which dissidents can take sanctuary while carrying out their activities. This situation is unlike the situation in Poland, for example, where the Roman Catholic Church is very strong and where the labor union, Solidarity, was able to mobilize people against the government.<sup>66</sup> It is also unlike the situation in much of Latin America in the past, such as Nicaragua, where the Catholic Church played an important role in opposition to the government through their application of liberation theology. This type of institutional leadership is markedly absent in Cuba due to the regime's control, repression, and infiltration of these groups.

While the government discourages opposition groups, at least one author believes that the regime actually encourages a certain amount of criticism of the regime and government policy, especially in terms of exposing mismanagement and corruption. The government has allowed local governments to relay these grievances and complaints to the central government. This has acted as another

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<sup>66</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," p. 99.

important safety valve for the government.<sup>69</sup> While this may be true to some extent, it also seems that the regime is willing to tolerate only a certain low level of criticism, as can be seen by the existence and activities of the rapid-reaction brigades and other repressive measures.

Another major tool that Castro uses extremely well to maintain his power is nationalism. He has successfully linked this with anti-U.S. rhetoric and propaganda<sup>70</sup>, making the U.S. in effect a scapegoat. The U.S. embargo is blamed for the country's current economic crisis. Cuba sees itself as David, and the United States as Goliath trying to starve them into getting rid of Castro. Castro has been able to use this argument to gain support for the "special period" that has been declared.<sup>71</sup> This nationalism serves Castro well in unifying the country against what is seen as a common enemy of Cuba.

After the revolution, the elite and middle class were stripped of their influence, prestige, and property. They abhorred Castro's socialist changes and many fled the country to the United States, where they still use their influence with the U.S. government to try to bring down

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<sup>69</sup>Jorge I. Domínguez, "The Secrets of Castro's Staying Power," Foreign Affairs, 72, No. 2 (1993), pp. 97-98.

<sup>70</sup>Mark Falcoff, "Is Cuba Next?," Commentary, 94, No. 5, (1992). Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

<sup>71</sup>McGeary, p. 54.



Castro.<sup>72</sup> However, this flight of the country's elite meant that there were very few left within Cuba to oppose Castro. Those who did remain would understandably not be willing to express their opposition. After three decades there has yet to be a reemergence of this group that is willing to oppose Castro due to the severe repressive nature of the regime.

Given these circumstances, a "revolution from below" by the masses seems unlikely. The regime holds too tight a rein over the population. People have become tired and demoralized. Many experience a "pervasive sense of powerlessness" and have accepted the fact that Castro may still be around for some time to come.<sup>73</sup> In some respects, this concurs with James Scott's Moral Economy of the Peasant theory. In this theory, peasants are unwilling to take unnecessary risks to improve their average income when it will jeopardize the amount of income they need to merely subsist. In other words, they prefer to take no action as long as they are able to subsist.<sup>74</sup> As one Western diplomat was quoted as saying recently, "a vast majority of the population is sitting and waiting until the situation is

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<sup>72</sup>E. Bradford Burns, Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 285.

<sup>73</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," p. 102.

<sup>74</sup>James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), passim.

resolved for them." A majority of the population does "not seem to care what kind of political system they have as long as they have an economy that works."<sup>75</sup> Although currently Cuba's economy is definitely not working well, people are still managing to get by even though their quality of life has declined significantly. As long as Castro and his regime are able to exert their control through repression, mobilization, and nationalist rhetoric, they will remain in power. They are in effect, the only game in town since they have been able to squash nearly all opposition. With no strong, organized opposition group for the people to rally behind, the populace is left with essentially no other choice, but to submit to the government. To do otherwise is to risk almost certain harassment, imprisonment, or physical abuse. As one author states, "Castro's 'final hour' seems likely to last for several years, and perhaps, much longer."<sup>76</sup>

## 2. Coup from the Top?

Fidel Castro has held onto his power in Cuba since January 1959, over 35 years. This is quite remarkable, given the current economic situation in Cuba. This section will examine how Castro has been successfully able to maintain his power and avoid a coup from the top by both the

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<sup>75</sup>McGeary, p. 52.

<sup>76</sup>Donald E. Schulz, "The United States and Cuba: From a Strategy of Conflict to Constructive Engagement," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 35, No. 2 (1993), p. 81.

civilian and military elite for these past 35 years through control of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), and the military and security apparatus.

**a. The Party**

Castro's control of the Communist Party of Cuba (the Partido Comunista de Cuba, or PCC) is a key element of his hold over Cuban politics. This party was established by Castro in 1965. It is the last of three attempts to combine members of the 26 July Movement with the former orthodox Communist party, the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). Its organizational structure is patterned after the former Communist party in the Soviet Union. It is the only political party permitted in Cuba. Its membership is 600,000 full and candidate members. Fidel Castro is the ranking member of the Political Bureau (Politburo) and the first secretary of the Party. Raul Castro is the second secretary of the party and second ranking member of the Politburo. The party consisted of a Central Committee with about 100 members, the Politburo with 13 members, and the Secretariat of 11 members. The party has been successful in mobilizing most of the population into its affiliated mass membership structures, such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and peasant, worker, and youth groups. All important executive posts are filled with party members. In the case of the National Assembly, about 90 percent of the deputies are members of the party or its

affiliated mass organizations. Castro dominates the party, and most of its leaders were members of the 26 July Movement, not the old Communist party with which Castro had had some disagreements in the past. In fact, the first attempt at a new communist party was disbanded after its leader, Anibal Escalante, tried to supplant the members loyal to Castro with his orthodox members. However, since 1968, the revolution has been firmly institutionalized and Castro has remained in control." With this pervasive presence of the party in the government and Castro's strong control of the party, it would be difficult for a coup from above to take place.

In October 1991, the Communist Party convened the Fourth Congress of the PCC. Many had seen this as a chance for major reform to begin to take place. However, instead of instituting changes in the system, such as democratization, instituting free markets, or privatization of the economy, it merely reaffirmed the existing order. Although it did not reinstitute the Peasant Free Market as many had hoped, it did approve the government's efforts to attract foreign technology and investment. The Congress also adopted important measures, such as personnel and organizational changes to help them avoid falling into the same trap that led to the fall of the Soviet Union. It got rid of the Party Secretariat and its departments and

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"Rossi, p. 86.

transferred its remaining functions to other state and government organizations. The Central Committee of the party also underwent a substantial change in its membership, replacing about 60 percent of its members. New members were appointed to the Politburo, whose membership was increased to 25 members, with no alternates. There were several significant aspects of this turnover in the Politburo:

1) several old fidelista and raulista supporters were not renamed; 2) three of the 15 new members are in their 50's, 8 are in their 40's, and one is in his 30's. This means that almost half of the members are not members of Castro's generation; 3) Carlos Aldana was appointed to the Politburo, showing his increasing status in the party. (He was then subsequently sacked along with the party secretary and seven municipal secretaries responsible for production of food for Havana because he had dared to suggest political and economic reforms<sup>78</sup>). These changes effectively consolidated fidelista control of the regime. The transformed 25-member Politburo gained new policymaking authority since the Central Committee had been dissolved. It is significant that although most of the new members of the Politburo represent a younger generation, they are still fidelistas and therefore unlikely to differ with the regime on policy questions. It is also significant that most of

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<sup>78</sup>John Hughes, "Castro's Long Reign May End in Violence," Christian Science Monitor, 1 Oct. 1992, p. 19. Abstract in Info-South. University of Miami: North-South Center.

them are virtually unknown and have no following or power base of their own. This would make it very difficult for them to institute any kind of coup attempt against the regime. Of further importance is the fact that the Politburo's new membership includes virtually no trained economists or technocrats. The only exception is one 79 year old member who was trained in Marxist economics before the revolution. Several did not even go to college. Five of them are military members, the rest are party functionaries who have spent their careers in the various party organizations. Castro has surrounded himself with these hardline followers who are unlikely to broach any major economic or political reforms. The regime is returning to its 1960's view, emphasizing politically and ideologically driven solutions for its hurting economy. It is still following the old path of a command directed economy, mass mobilization of the population, and the forced austerity of the Special Period.<sup>79</sup> The party leadership is closing ranks against any internal political or ideological division. This will help Castro to continue to consolidate and retain his power.

Finally, government and party officials, and state supported scientists, artists, and writers enjoy special privileges to which the rest of the population has no access. Perhaps partly for this reason, the

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<sup>79</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 6-9.

revolutionary leadership supports Castro's policies."<sup>80</sup> In addition, the continuation of the current regime is the elites' only guarantee of survival. If Castro topples, they will forfeit their privileges, power, and perhaps even their lives. This fact of life alone will keep most of them in line and working together to maintain the status quo.<sup>81</sup>

#### **b. The Military and Security Apparatus**

According to *Newsweek* English, in 1988 Cuba was probably the most completely militarized country in the world in terms of absolute numbers. The Cuban military ranks second only to Brazil in terms of numbers, compared to other Latin American countries, and at least in 1988, it was the best equipped in terms of military equipment, in the region. (This was before the fall of the Soviet Union, which supplied most of its equipment). However, the army has no strategic weapons, the Navy is for the most part relegated to coastal defense, and the Air Force's main role is as a fighter and tactical support force. In 1963, after the revolutionary regime had crushed the last remnants of armed internal opposition, it reimposed compulsory military service. Cuban military involvement outside the Western Hemisphere began back in the early 1960's and troops were sent to many countries throughout Africa. Cuban troops basically acted as a surrogate for the Soviet Union, in

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<sup>80</sup>Gonzalez, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?", pp. 104-105.

return for which the Soviets supplied them with formidable military equipment. Military officers are given professional training at one of three schools, the General Antonio Maceo Interarms School for mechanized infantry, armored troops, logistic, and engineering troops, the General Jose Maceo Interarms School for motorized infantry, armored troops, artillery and engineer troops, or the General Carlos Roloff Communications and Chemical Troops School. Artillery officers receive advanced training at the Camilo Cienfuegos Artillery School. Courses are four or five years long depending on the curriculum, and lead to a degree in science or engineering. Company and field grade officers from all three services may take post-graduate courses at the Maximo Gomez Military Academy which provides training for potential staff officers. In the past, many officers also received post-graduate training in the Soviet Union. This regimen of deployment and professional training has transformed the Cuban military from a pre-revolutionary armed force that was singularly unimpressive among Latin American forces, to a formidable professional force providing an effective deterrent.<sup>82</sup>

Cuba's paramilitary forces are also fairly large, including: 15,000 National Revolutionary Police, 3500 border troops, 1500 Ministry of the Interior Special

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<sup>82</sup>Adrian J. English, Regional Defence Profile No. 1: Latin America (London: Jane's Publishing Company Limited, 1988), pp. 122-138.



Troops, a 100,000 strong Labour Youth Army, and 500,000 in the Territorial Troop Militia. The Ministry of the Interior is in charge of all internal security in the country.<sup>83</sup> It is this ministry that is able to strike terror in the hearts of Cuban citizens since it is the one concerned with maintaining internal security and repressing any opposition to the regime.

During the first 26 years of the revolution, it was difficult to distinguish between the responsibilities of civilian government officials and those of personnel in the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). This was particularly true of the 1960's as the government tried to organize popular support and consolidate its power. Jorge Domínguez coined the term "civic soldier" to explain this type of civil-military relations. These civic soldiers were military members who administered large sectors of military and civilian life. They were supposed to embody the ideology and tradition of the revolution, and were held up as examples to the rest of the population. Castro himself is a good example of this union of military and civilian roles and duties.<sup>84</sup> Even after 35 years, he continues to promote his image as a revolutionary war hero through the

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<sup>83</sup>English, p. 135.

<sup>84</sup>Phyllis Greene Walker, "National Security," in Cuba: A Country Study, ed. James D. Rudolph (Washington, DC: Foreign Area Studies, The American University, 1985), p. 246.

wearing of the uniform and constant references made to the revolution. While this dual mission on the part of the civic soldier- being involved in both civilian and military matters- diminished starting in 1973, due to Soviet influence and emphasis on professionalization and specialization,<sup>85</sup> the FAR has been getting involved again recently in civil matters, such as agriculture.

Members of the military were also among the vanguard of the PCC. In 1970, almost 70 percent of all military officers were members of either the PCC, or the Union of Young Communists, its affiliated youth organization. The preponderance of military officers on the Central Committee of the PCC shows their importance in the party. Shortly after the founding of the party in 1965, the PCC organization was integrated into the FAR. The three services- the army, navy, and air force- each had its own political section. In order to be promoted, it was important to be a member of the PCC or the Union of Young Communists. The Party saw the FAR as a good place to indoctrinate nonparty members into communist ideology. Therefore, education in Marxist-Leninist ideology was included as a part of basic military training.<sup>86</sup> This close integration between the military and the party and its

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<sup>85</sup>Walker, p. 248.

<sup>86</sup>Walker, p. 247.

ideology is another way Castro and his regime have been able to stay in power.

Another example of the regime's quick action against potential reformers and criticizers, is that taken against Carlos Aldana, former Politburo member, and at one time, Cuba's premier bureaucrat. His liberal attitudes, such as a willingness to tolerate dissent, and his desire to permit more freedom for citizens wanting to travel abroad, got him relieved from his office. The charges against him were simply a pretext for removing him from office, even though this would not ordinarily be the case for minor charges such as these. His firing was meant as a warning for others wanting to change the regime. His removal was likely to influence other elites because "if even this 'moderate' could be disgraced, no one was safe."<sup>87</sup>

I agree with Schulz when he says that a golpe de estado is unlikely in Cuba in the near future.<sup>88</sup> Fidel Castro has maintained a strong grip on his power through his control of the civilian and military elite. He originally gained his control over both of these sectors during the revolution by using his charisma, intelligence, and cunning, as well as taking advantage of fate after the deaths of the revolution's other two leaders, Jose Antonio Echeverria and Frank Pais. Even at this early stage, both political and

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<sup>87</sup>Schulz, "Can Castro Survive?," pp. 104-105.

<sup>88</sup>Schulz, "The United States and Cuba," p. 81.

military leaders were responsible to him. His brother Raul also gained loyal followers at this time and earned a reputation for his leadership, organizational skills, and his prompt, decisive action against those who opposed him or broke the rules.

Castro also has firm control over the Party apparatus. He has centralized party power with himself as the head, and is bringing up a new generation of party leaders who are loyal to him. In addition, he has made sure that this new generation has not developed their own power base, making it more difficult for them to organize against him.

The military with its compulsory service helps to indoctrinate the general population with communist ideology. The armed forces have had combat experience in Africa and earned a reputation as fighters. Military officers receive university and post-graduate level education at military academies. During the Cold War, some Cuban officers received professional education in the Soviet Union and Soviet advisors provided technical and military training for Cuba's armed forces. These factors helped to professionalize the military and the officer corps, helping to keep them loyal and under check. Castro has kept his thumb on both civilian and military elite through repression, execution, and removal of officials from office.

These methods have enabled him to remain in power for over 35 years and are still serving him well.

## **V. U.S. POLICY OPTIONS FOR ENCOURAGING DEMOCRACY IN CUBA**

The U.S. embargo against Cuba, in conjunction with the loss of support from the Soviet Union after its fall, has made a big impact on Cuba's economy. The lack of fuel, food, and consumer goods has been keenly felt by the Cuban population. However, as previously stated, the goal of the sanctions is not merely to inflict economic hardship on the Cuban people. The ultimate goal of the sanctions is the destabilization of Castro's regime. So far this goal does not seem to be within reach. Castro and his government remain in firm control of the country even in the face of severe economic hardship and the enforced austerity measures of the special period in time of peace. The question remains: what is the best policy option for the United States to pursue with regard to Cuba? What are the options?

The first option to decide on is whether to leave the sanctions against Cuba in place, or to lift them. Let us take a look at both of these scenarios. First, what would be likely to happen if the sanctions were left in place? Although the regime has not yet been destabilized, continuing economic pressure without some form of relief would most probably lead to the eventual downfall of the regime several years down the road due to the resulting deprivation and economic hardship imposed on the population.

However, the government has successfully repressed nearly all effective opposition in Cuba. There are virtually no leaders or organized groups that would be able to come forward and implement a new government when the old one falls. This would lead to a situation of absolute chaos with no one in control of the country. It is possible that Cuba would become another Haiti with the military in control, or even worse, a Somalia with local warlords fighting over control of the country.

Of course, Jorge Mas Canosa and the Cuban American National Foundation have reportedly put together a provisional government that could step in immediately after the regime falls. However, given the fact that this government would be made up of Cuban exiles who fled Cuba to avoid hardship, political persecution, arrest, to pursue economic success unattainable in Cuba, and who are much better off than the population that remains in Cuba, they are unlikely to be accepted as a legitimate government by the Cuban people who have been through the economic difficulties of the special period and the repressive measures of Castro's regime. In order for this to work, this type of provisional government would have to have the military backing of the United States. In effect, this would more than likely be the equivalent of re-instituting a dictatorial government similar to Batista's. With the emphasis placed on democratic governments by the United

States, picking this option would be bad for the image of the United States in the international community.

Another aspect in considering whether or not to lift the embargo is what Castro's behavior is likely to be if the economic and political pressure continues to build as a result of maintaining the embargo. According to Arquilla, in Castro's mind, a confrontational high risk policy toward the United States may be in his best interests in order to maintain his power. This approach could be put into effect by such actions as seeking new allies, "people siphoning" (allowing dissidents and other trouble makers to leave the country), profiting from the drug trade, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons). Of course, all of these actions have the potential to inflict harm on the United States. When backed into a corner with the issue being survival, Castro may lash out mercilessly in order to maintain his control over the Cuban state and people. He has shown his willingness in the past to turn to extreme and risky behavior, for example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, when the threat of Soviet missiles in Cuba brought the United States to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, by aiding revolutionary movements in Latin America and Africa, and by sending Cuban troops to Angola and Ethiopia. He is



obviously not afraid to antagonize the United States in order to achieve his goals."

Lifting the embargo against Cuba would alleviate some of the economic hardships in Cuba and perhaps help to stabilize the government. It would also make the regime less able to use the United States as a scapegoat to accuse of all the country's problems. The regime would be forced to accept responsibility for these problems. This would make it more difficult for the regime to keep up the nationalism that helps unite the country against the United States. This would also put the United States in a better position to influence a regime change when Castro finally steps down or simply dies. The United States can then enhance this position by implementing further policies that will improve relations between the two countries. Being in a position to influence who takes power will help prevent the power vacuum and chaos that would result from a sudden collapse of the regime.

Before ending the sanctions, the United States should attempt to negotiate with Fidel Castro his departure from the government and the orderly transition of the regime toward democracy. This could be done quietly and in a way that would allow him to save face- an important point, given

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"John Arquilla, A Decision Modeling Perspective on U.S.-Cuba Relations (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993), pp. xii, 7, 16.

his intense pride- and that would guarantee his safety, another major concern.

Even Castro admits that the tough realities of life in Cuba have forced the government to move toward capitalism. Many believe that Castro has been forced to legitimize what the Cuban people have already been doing illegally. Castro is seen as simply being pragmatic, doing what is necessary to remain in power, not as fundamentally changing his ways of thinking. Even so, there are more changes in the works according to Carlos Lage, Cuba's economics czar. He has plans to introduce a new tax system, restructure the agricultural sector, and downsize the government workforce. There are even rumors of "eliminating government control" over who may leave Cuba.<sup>90</sup>

Castro has been forced to use large amounts of political repression and to allow change in the economy in order to maintain his power. If he foresees that even these changes cannot keep him in power over the long term, he may be willing to step aside. Much depends on the success of the new joint ventures and economic changes taking place in Cuba. If they fail, the situation can only worsen. In this case, negotiations would allow him a way out of a bad situation. However, even if Castro refuses to step down from power, it may still be possible for the United States to negotiate with him. He is making progress toward a

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<sup>90</sup>McGeary, p. 45.

capitalist economy. His willingness to accept and even introduce these economic changes could be a signal that he would be willing to entertain negotiations. Lifting the embargo would allow him to ease up on his repression, and this could be negotiated. Finally, even if Castro refuses to negotiate, the United States could unilaterally drop the sanctions. This could still be to the United States' advantage since increased trade and communication with Cuba could lead to a decrease in nationalism which could weaken the Cuban government's hold on the people.

So, why should Castro be willing to negotiate an end to the embargo with the United States? 1) If he believes that continued economic stress brought about by the embargo will eventually lead to a disintegration of his regime and thus put him in danger of losing power and possibly his life, it will give him a way out of the dilemma. 2) If he believes his power is secure, it could still be to his advantage to negotiate an end to the embargo. This could lead to a strengthening of the Cuban economy due to U.S. investment, technology, and tourism, perhaps in return for an improvement in the area of human rights and free elections. With an improved economy, he would not have to apply so much repression to keep the population under control. He could afford to let up on the pressure.

Ending the embargo could lead to a more immediate reduction of the repression inflicted by the regime on the

Cuban population. This could allow more room and resources for action to Cuban elites who favor reform. It could also allow civil society to develop more fully, including nongovernment actors. These social and political groups would be extremely important in the development of a democratic government. It could even lead eventually to free and fair elections in Cuba. Another important result from lifting the embargo would be that U.S. companies could compete with European and other investors in Cuba for business. Also, it would be good for the image of the United States in Latin America to be seen to be making conciliation with Cuba.<sup>91</sup> This has long been a sore spot in U.S. foreign relations with certain Latin American countries. Mexico, for example, has traditionally traded and continued its relations with Cuba despite the U.S. economic and diplomatic sanctions placed on Cuba.

Another option for U.S. policy which does not seem worth pursuing is to increase pressure against Cuba. This could include sharply restricting legal and illegal immigration to the United States, thus increasing social and political pressures in Cuba by forcing dissidents to remain in Cuba; and U.S. military intervention, perhaps in the guise of humanitarian intervention if the situation seems to worsen and get more chaotic.<sup>92</sup> However, according to Dahl,

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<sup>91</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 69-70.

<sup>92</sup>Gonzalez, p. 66.

military intervention or conquest has not worked well in the recent past to help institute a democratic government. In fact, this method has been found to have worked in only four countries- those that were defeated by the Allied powers in World War II- Austria, the German Federal Republic, Italy, and Japan. It has been suggested that these are historically unique cases that are unlikely to be repeated elsewhere. It is also unlikely that a stable democracy will result from a sudden collapse of the old regime because in this case the new regime may lack legitimacy and some citizens will remain loyal to the old regime. This path to democracy has been infrequent in the past."<sup>3</sup>

According to Dahl, in the future as in the past, stable democracies (or polyarchies as he calls them) are more likely to result from slow "evolutionary processes than the revolutionary overthrow of the existing hegemonies." A few examples of this type of evolutionary process are: Great Britain, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay."<sup>4</sup> Taking this into consideration, the best course of action for the United States would seem to be to encourage this evolutionary process toward democracy. The most effective way to achieve this would be to increase information flow

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<sup>3</sup>Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 42-43.

<sup>4</sup>Dahl, pp. 42, 45.

and communication between the United States and Cuba at the level of both the government and the private individual. Learning about the United States, democracy, and capitalism will show the Cuban population what the outside world is like, and perhaps motivate them to reform their government and economy. This type of policy, in conjunction with the military arms race during the Cold War and the resulting bankruptcy it caused, is what led to the fall of the Soviet Union and other communist countries in the Eastern Bloc.

Increased communication and information flow to Cuba can be achieved in several ways. Currently, certain items are allowed into Cuba under the terms of the embargo: books, periodicals, microfiche, records, compact discs. Direct marketing of these items is prohibited, but their distribution could be increased by dropping the embargo and allowing sales. Telephone communications could be increased which would also allow for greater exchanges by facsimile machines, and especially computers. Also very important are computer hardware and software, electronic mail, and computer networks (these are becoming increasingly important in the academic world). These items and capabilities are especially important for Cuba to become competitive in the business world and may attract U.S. businesses to the country (or at least the lack of them might keep them away). Cuba is currently training its young people to use computers and develop computer hardware and software. It also

convenes international conferences addressing these areas. Cuba does have access to several computer networks already, and can keep in touch with important academic research and activist networks around the world. Common technological tools such as facsimile and copy machines, desktop publishing equipment, and video cameras would be useful to human rights groups in spreading information and documenting human rights abuses by the regime to the rest of the world.<sup>95</sup>

U.S.-sponsored Radio Marti and TV Marti have been good sources of information from outside Cuba. However, some have questioned whether their objectives of encouraging the development of civil society in Cuba and maintaining contact between the Cuban exile community and the Cuban population have been compromised. Their programming has highlighted Jorge Mas Canosa, leader of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), while ignoring vocal Cuban based dissidents, such as Elizardo Sanchez. Elliot Abrams, former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, has objected to this strategy since it makes Washington appear to favor the CANF in what is perceived to be a future power struggle. This falls right in line with Castro's propaganda that the United States is in collusion with Cuban-American millionaires.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 71-74.

<sup>96</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 72-73.

Person to person and group to group contacts should be encouraged. This could be done by removing the restrictions imposed on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens. Visits and exchanges between academics, scientists, teachers, and other professionals could be promoted.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps more importantly, tourism and business contacts should be encouraged. Contacts between these groups of people would lead to a freer flow of technological, political, economic, and business ideas. Even though Castro and his regime are probably aware of the far reaching implications of these policies and would try to counteract and control them, they also know that high tech information, equipment, and people are essential to the growth of business and joint ventures. They may be willing to take the risk, as they are already doing with Western European countries, Canada, and others. In the long run a policy increasing the free flow of ideas and communication could lead to political reform in Cuba.

Finally, investment and perhaps even aid to Cuba should be encouraged. Cuba's wallowing economy is one of the main issues used by Castro to place blame on the United States. This has traditionally galvanized the Cuban population by increasing the nationalism of the country. Without this tool, Castro would be forced to either accept the blame for the economic problems, or alternatively, the United States

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<sup>97</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 74-75.



may be seen in a more positive light by the Cuban people if the economy improves.

## **VI. INCENTIVES AND IMPEDIMENTS TO LIFTING THE EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA**

While it is impossible to precisely measure the economic effects of the embargo of Cuba in the United States, it is safe to assume there are some. Evidence of this is the fact that many Western European countries, Canada, Mexico, and others, have been trading for quite some time with Cuba, and are interested in forming joint ventures with the island. Exactly what the potential profit would be and whether trade and investment would be successful is impossible to determine at this point in time. However, according to one source, Cuba would welcome the investment and expertise of U.S. firms in their country.<sup>98</sup>

One source states that without the embargo, the United States would hypothetically have exported \$432 million worth of goods to Cuba in 1987. Instead, because of the embargo, it actually exported only \$1 million worth of goods. This amounted to a loss in that year of \$431 million dollars. Another 1988 study estimated that U.S. firms had lost \$30 billion in exports to Cuba in 25 years, due to the embargo. Meanwhile, countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in that same year

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<sup>98</sup>"Cuba Learns," Forbes, 28 Feb. 1994, p. 68.

exported \$882 million worth of goods to Cuba.<sup>99</sup> Obviously, other advanced countries are taking advantage of the opportunity to trade with Cuba. Clearly, U.S. companies are missing out on potential trade with Cuba. With Cuba's proximity to the United States and Cuba's need for technology, the United States would be a natural trading and business partner for Cuba and Cuban firms.

There are several impediments involved in lifting the embargo against Cuba. The first is the American people. With the end of the Cold War, many people simply no longer care about the issue since it does not impinge on their everyday lives. The non-Cuban sector of the U.S. population, at least among those who are better informed and care enough to have formed an opinion, is split on the issue. Many of these U.S. citizens would be opposed to an easing of sanctions. There is still some anti-communist, anti-Castro sentiment left even though the Cold War has ended. People old enough to remember the Cuban Missile Crisis will not easily forget the part Castro and Cuba had to play in it. Also, Castro is not an easy man to like, with his anti-U.S. rhetoric and nationalism. He and his regime are one of the last remnants of communism in the world and one of the few nondemocratic regimes left in the Western Hemisphere. For these reasons, many U.S. citizens would prefer to continue the embargo indefinitely.

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<sup>99</sup>Hufbauer, pp. 81, 200.

However, there are also many in the United States who are too young to remember the events of the missile crisis and see the sanctions against Cuba as one of the last relics of the Cold War. This group would favor a lifting of the embargo. They would be well represented by two reporters who recently travelled to Cuba. According to these reporters, U.S. travellers to Cuba are struck by the deprivations that the embargo is placing on the Cuban people, who are viewed as the innocent victims of the sanctions. Shortages of food, medicine, fuel, school supplies, and factory parts are causing suffering and severely affecting their quality of life. Children leave school to beg for money from tourists, and prostitution and theft have also increased with the increase in tourism. They also state that we are alienating our trading partners and humiliating the United Nations due to our hardline stance against Cuba. They believe our policy toward Cuba caters to the right wing Cuban American National Foundation who wants only to reclaim power in Cuba.<sup>100</sup> There are obviously other Americans in this country who hold similar views.

The embargo has also caused some heated debate in the Cuban American community. At one extreme is Jorge Mas Canosa and the conservative Cuban American National

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<sup>100</sup> Axel Meyer and Cecile Meyer, Letter, New York Times, 16 May 1994, sec. A, p. 10.

Foundation, who would like to maintain a strict embargo until a total strangling of the Cuban economy leads to a collapse of Castro and his regime, and who then intend to send in their own previously formed Cuban government. This group fights to stop an easing of sanctions against Cuba. They are very powerful, especially in Florida and Washington, DC. A good number of them are the old elite who fled Cuba to avoid the outcome of the Cuban Revolution. They are extremely involved in politics and exert great influence. It was mainly due to their efforts, along with Representative Robert Torricelli, that the Torricelli Bill, also known as the Cuban Democracy Act, was passed and signed into law in 1992.

On the other hand, a new generation of Cuban Americans is emerging- a younger, less conservative group. They are less concerned about taking vengeance against Castro, and more concerned about the fate of their families and friends who remain in Cuba and are currently experiencing the effects of economic crisis. Members of this more liberal group are the ones who send most of the U.S. dollars and basic necessities and luxuries to their relatives, now that this action has been legalized by U.S. law.

These more moderate groups, such as Cambio Cubano, the Cuban Committee for Democracy, and the Cuban American Committee for Peace, are asking for improved relations between the United States and Cuba. Raymundo Del Toro,

President of the Cuban American Committee for Peace, has accused the conservative Cuban exiles (such as Alpha 66) of making death threats against more moderate Cubans who speak their views. He has also labelled Representative Torricelli as an opportunistic politician and Jorge Mas Canosa an egomaniac, and accused them of formulating policies that cause suffering to loved ones in Cuba. He would like to see the Cuban market opened to U.S. businesses, so that they can compete with Latin American, European, Asian, and Canadian companies and supply Cuba with enough food and medicine to make a real improvement in the Cuban situation. He believes this can only be done by trade, not through the small amount of goods allowed by charity. These people also want to be able to visit their families in both Cuba and the United States. Some even want to invest in Cuba. These moderates are becoming more numerous and are willing to speak up about these issues even though there is some risk to them from the conservatives.<sup>101</sup>

Another group that will make it hard to lift the embargo is the U.S. policymakers and politicians. As previously discussed, the U.S. Congress recently passed the Cuban Democracy Act, in large part due to the efforts of Representative Torricelli who sponsored the bill. This gives a good indication of the mindset of U.S. policymakers

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<sup>101</sup>Raymundo Del Toro, Letter, New York Times, 16 May 1994, sec. A, p. 10.

in Washington. Due to the strong influence of the CANF and the expected response of the American public, many will naturally be afraid to be seen supporting an easing of sanctions and bridging the gap between the two countries. For some politicians it would be seen as political suicide. Even President Clinton tried to win the state of Florida in the 1992 presidential election by supporting a tightening of the embargo, although this strategy did not win him the state.<sup>102</sup>

This is in great contrast to current U.S. policy toward other communist countries. China is a good example of this type of policy. It has been granted most favored nation (MFN) trading status for many years, despite the fact that it remains communist and uses repressive measures against its citizens. It is true that the United States has recently threatened to take away this privileged status, but it has decided to end these threats. In late May 1994, President Clinton announced that the goal of the improvement of human rights in China would no longer be linked to U.S. trade policy. Instead, the United States extended most favored nation trading status to China. The current goal is to keep trade and communication links open to China in order to try to influence them.<sup>103</sup> The similarities to Cuba are

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<sup>102</sup>Del Toro, Letter.

<sup>103</sup>ABC News, Speech by President Clinton, 25 May 1994.

obvious, yet the policy implementation is 180 degrees different.

Of course, the main difference is that at one time Cuba was practically U.S. territory. There were close economic links between the two countries, a high level of political involvement in Cuba on the part of the United States, and U.S. tourists flocked to Cuba as if it was their own backyard. When this close relationship was severed, it created extreme animosity on both sides. This has made it harder to reconcile the two countries. It has also made it easy for Castro to denounce U.S. imperialism. However, after a prolonged period of time a grudge such as this ceases to serve a useful purpose and becomes a feud which is simply carried on because that is the way things have always been- it is difficult for either side to change its behavior toward the other, the pattern has been set.

Another example is Vietnam, also a communist country. The United States implemented an embargo against communist controlled areas of Vietnam in 1958. This embargo was extended to all of Vietnam in April of 1975, when South Vietnam fell to the Communists.<sup>104</sup> This embargo was recently lifted by the United States, again showing the differential treatment given to various communist countries.

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<sup>104</sup>U.S. Cong., House, Subcommittee on International Trade and Commerce of the Committee on International Relations, Export Licensing of Private Humanitarian Assistance to Vietnam, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: GPO, 9 Sep. 1975), p. 21.



A major difference between China and Vietnam on the one hand, and Cuba on the other, is that China and Vietnam are embracing capitalism and are becoming fairly successful at it (that, along with the fact that they are much farther removed from the United States than Cuba). However, with Cuba beginning to make a movement toward capitalism, should the United States continue to treat Cuba differently? And if it does, how can it justify this policy to the rest of the world? And finally, how can we encourage Cuba's progress toward capitalism and a transition to democracy? It is time to change our policy. I believe it is time for a more pragmatic approach toward Cuba. It is time to try to restore Cuba to the international sphere. This could benefit the United States economically (however slightly), as well as be a more effective way to pursue its goals for Cuba of steering them toward a more capitalist economy and democratic government. Our policy toward Cuba is out of line with our policy toward other socialist countries, such as Vietnam, a country toward which the United States has also had a long standing embargo which it recently decided to lift.

Admittedly, dropping the embargo could prove to be very difficult politically, given the strong feelings many American citizens and politicians would have against this move. It would also be a very delicate matter to negotiate

with Castro. However, it would be worthwhile to work toward this goal.

The Clinton Administration recently announced that the "enlargement of democracy" was its new alternative to replace the strategy of containment. It is unclear exactly what this means since this strategic concept has not been clarified the way containment was. Containment was clearly spelled out, so that day-to-day policy could be implemented from it. According to Kissinger, there are still several questions that need to be answered:

What precisely does enlargement of democracy mean? Whom does it imply we should support? With what means?... This tendency toward abstraction is compounded by an extraordinary obsession with public relations. Exorbitant attention is devoted to blunting short-term domestic criticism, treating foreign policy as if it were a domestic issue susceptible to consensus through trade-offs. But foreign affairs is a continuing process; segmenting it into individual cases generally ends up offending everybody, at home and abroad.<sup>105</sup>

Whatever is meant by enlargement of democracy, it cannot mean supporting only our allies and those countries that are already democracies. This would be simply maintaining the status quo, not enlarging democracy. It seems that in order to actually enlarge democracy, the United States must also be willing to reach out and encourage democracy in those countries it is not on such friendly terms with, as well as those that are not yet democracies. U.S. policy toward and relations with our neighbor, Cuba, would be a good place for

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<sup>105</sup>Henry A. Kissinger, "At Sea in a New World," Newsweek, 6 Jun. 1994, p.37.

President Clinton to start. If the United States is truly moving toward this new strategy and is not just spouting rhetoric, it should adjust its policy toward Cuba to be more in line with this strategy and more in line with its treatment of other communist countries, such as China and Vietnam. Otherwise, the United States will appear to be arbitrary and lacking a plan for its foreign policy. This arbitrary treatment of certain countries has made Latin American countries wary of the United States in the past- this is only to be expected when its policies and actions cannot be anticipated, but are only determined on a case by case basis. This gives the appearance of being fickle.

With this in mind, a lifting of the embargo against Cuba in order to encourage a transition to democracy would be an excellent opportunity for the Clinton Administration to make good their new strategy. When approached in this light, it would have a greater chance of being accepted by the American people.

## **VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA**

There will certainly be a change in regime in Cuba sometime in the future, if not by revolution or by coup, then by Castro's death. It is better for the United States to be in a position to help influence this transition than to be seen as the enemy as they now are in Cuba. The embargo and current policy merely help the present regime to preserve itself by shifting the blame for Cuba's problems from the regime to the United States. Once the scapegoat is removed, Cuban citizens will be more likely to see where the blame really belongs. For this reason, the U.S. embargo against Cuba should be removed. Although there is no love lost between the United States government and its citizens, and Fidel Castro and his regime, the United States can afford to be pragmatic and begin to change its policy toward Cuba. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and consequently the communist threat, Cuba has in effect become emasculated.

Of course, it will not be easy for either the United States or Cuba to form closer relations, but I believe it to be necessary if the United States wants to have an influence on any future regime change in Cuba. Although Castro still has a firm grip on the country, without a change in the state of the economy and the ability to pay cash for

imports, the regime will eventually topple. In the meantime, the country will become more and more of a shambles and its ability to recover from the crisis will greatly diminish. In this type of situation, where there is a power vacuum, chaos will ensue and there is no telling what type of government, will eventually emerge. The United States does not need another potential Somalia brewing in Cuba, with no real government, and warlords fighting each other for their share of the island. If the situation eroded to this point, it would be very difficult indeed for the United States to have any kind of influence over the succeeding regime. Even occupation of the island might do little more than provide a small amount of stability to the country. While there have been some successful military interventions by the United States in Latin America, such as in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and Panama in 1989, the majority have not been that successful. Past occupations of Latin American countries, such as the 1914 occupation of Veracruz in Mexico, while temporarily improving stability, infrastructure, sanitation, and overall quality of life, are not permanent solutions. Under the U.S. military regime in Veracruz, the Mexicans had no say in their own government. Shortly after the American evacuation of Veracruz, the city quickly returned to its former state. "Within a few weeks it was difficult to tell that the Americans had ever

occupied the city."<sup>106</sup> This has been typical of U.S. occupations in Latin America. There is no reason to believe that an invasion and subsequent occupation of Cuba would be any different. Besides, the United States can no longer afford prolonged military adventures and occupations, either monetarily or politically.

The solution to this problem is to begin tentative negotiations with Castro in order to promote a change of regime and then to drop the embargo. Unfortunately, this will be difficult due to domestic politics in the United States (in no small measure due to the influence of the Cuban American National Foundation or CANF) and Castro's hubris or pride. The United States must seek a way to both deal with the CANF and to try to find a way for Castro to save face. Although it is impossible to determine the truth, Castro himself has hinted at the possibility of his stepping down "in return for an end to the embargo and a normalization of relations." He is quoted as saying, "If I were the obstacle, I would be willing to give not only my positions and my responsibilities, but even my life."<sup>107</sup>

Once the embargo has ended, the next step would be to increase communications between U.S. and Cuban citizens through a further increase in telephone, fax, and computer

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<sup>106</sup>Robert E. Quirk, An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Veracruz (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962), pp. 123-154, 169-171.

<sup>107</sup>Schulz, "The United States and Cuba," p. 95.

communication, tourism, and business links. It was this type of free flow of information and ideas that allowed a crack to form in the crusty exterior of communism in the Soviet Union. This crack led to the eventual crumbling of the communist regime, Russia's current attempt at democracy, and to the end of the Cold War that has brought the United States to this point of being able to begin reconsidering its own foreign policies.

Finally, the United States should encourage capitalism by encouraging U.S. business ventures in Cuba. This also helped bring about the fall of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. Even China has moved dramatically in this direction. The problem will be for the United States to be seen as a partner, not as the age old enemy stepping in to take unfair advantage of a Cuba that is in severe crisis. Any business ventures must be beneficial to both the investors and Cuba. One way of encouraging the investment of U.S. businesses would be for the United States government to guarantee them against loss. This way U.S. firms would have relatively little to lose, and potentially quite a bit to gain.

These actions could be augmented by allowing Cuba to return to full formal participation in the Organization of American States (OAS) from which it has been excluded from

formal participation since 1962.<sup>108</sup> This would help bring Cuba back into the diplomatic and economic activities of the Western Hemisphere. Other Latin American states may be able to exert considerable influence over Cuba in this respect.

Obviously, these steps will not be easy to take and to take successfully, but if successful, they will be the most effective way for the United States to have an impact on any regime transition that takes place in Cuba. This path would hopefully also lead to an improved and stable capitalist economy and an attempt at a new, democratic regime.

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<sup>108</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 1992 (Washington, DC: n.p., 1992), p. 86.



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